Anti-Porn Group Declares Win Over ‘Pedo Gamer Fetishists’ After Steam’s Mass Sex Game Purge

Alleged pressure from payment companies has sparked a censorship debate

By **Ethan Gach**

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Steam recently purged hundreds of sex games featuring explicit content, including many with themes around sexual abuse, after rolling out stricter moderation rules. PC gaming’s biggest storefront appeared to blame pressure from online payment processors for the changes, which some developers worry will lead to a censorship crackdown on anything Steam regards as too controversial, regardless of whether it contains harmful content or not. An anti-porn group, which previously tried to get games as mainstream as *Grand Theft Auto 5* banned, is now taking credit for Valve’s new policies and accusing critics of being “sick brain rotted pedo gamer fetishists.”

*(**Content warning:** This article mentions potentially upsetting game titles and topics.)*

The Australia-based anti-porn group Collective Shout took credit for Steam’s surprise moderation shift in a statement over the weekend. “Hundreds of sexually violent online games that let players role-play rape, incest and the torture of women and children have been suddenly removed from the global gaming platform Steam,” co-founder Melinda Tankard Reist wrote on X on July 19. “In a victory for child safety campaigners, Steam banned the ‘games’ after Australian-based Collective Shout accused the payment platforms Visa, PayPal and Mastercard of profiting from violent pornography.”

Collective Shout’s connection to the Steam sex game purge was first reported by Ana Valens at *Vice*, who noted that the “grassroots campaign” against the

objectification of women and sexualization of girls in media has previously published a letter to the CEOs behind PayPal, MasterCard, Visa, and other payment platforms accusing them of "profiting from rape, incest + child abuse" on Steam. Valens also pointed to Collective Shout's long history of calling for bans of mainstream games like *Detroit: Become Human* and *Grand Theft Auto V* over certain scenarios and portrayals in the games it deemed harmful toward women.

Collective Shout @CollectiveShout · Feb 16, 2018
Stop video game Detroit: Become Human, depicting child abuse and violence against women, being sold in Australia #notbuyingit #VAW
Sign this petition
>>change.org/p/the-hon-chri...
DETROIT
BECOME HUMAN
24
35
3

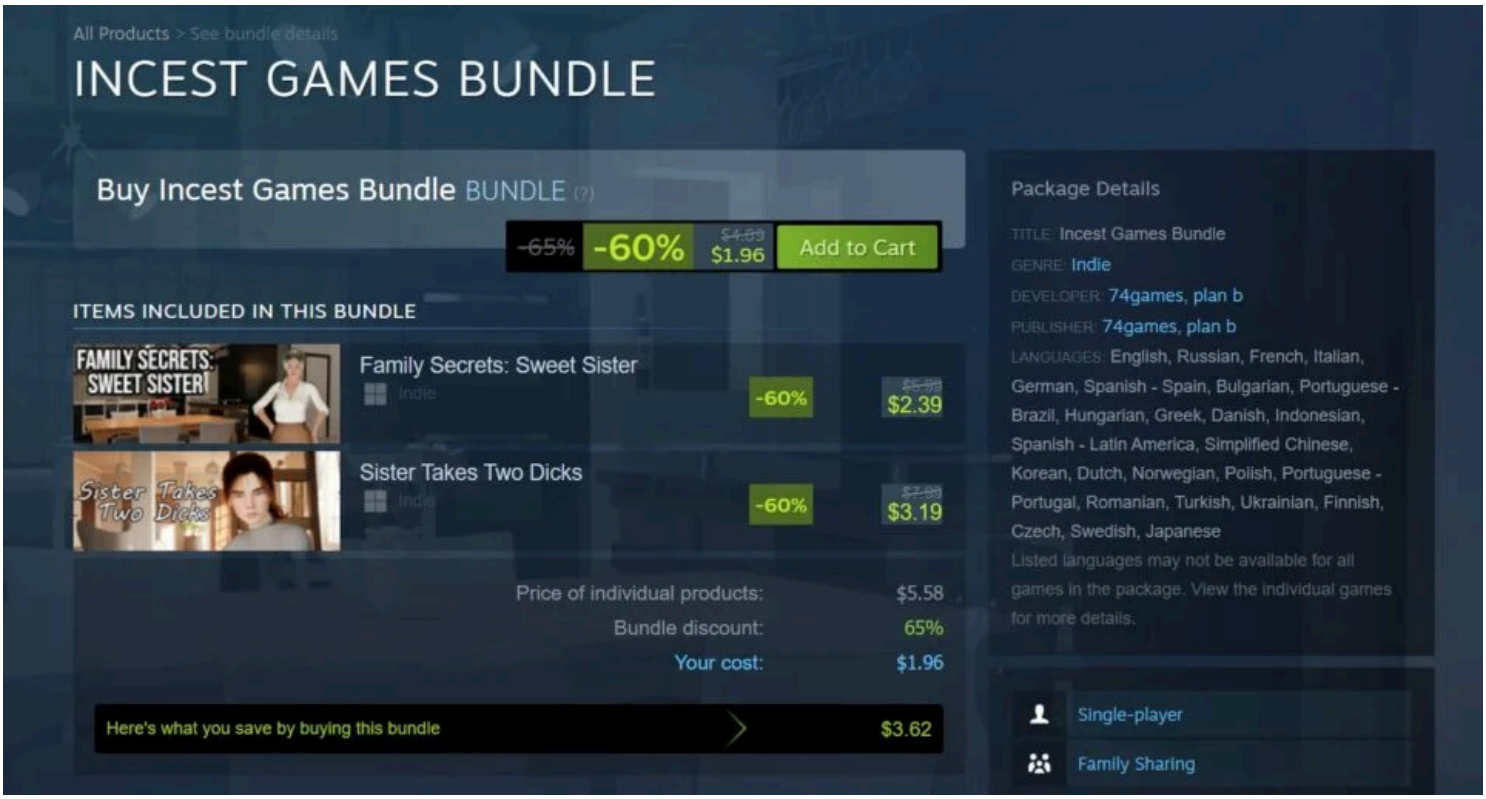
Screenshot: X / Kotaku

While those attempts to censor through manufactured controversy failed, Collective Shout may be having more success directly targeting payment processing companies which have been cracking down on pornography across

the the broader web on creator platforms like OnlyFans. Earlier this year, Fansly banned any sexualized "anthropomorphic content" in an apparent bid to censor bestiality on the platform, despite that being condemned within the furry community as well. Instead of nuanced moderation, some platforms appear to be making more drastic shifts to appease payment companies.

That's the concern around the recent purge of sex games on Steam. In addition to bans on games that use crypto currencies or feature "sexually explicit images of real people," Valve added the much more ambiguous restriction against "Content that may violate the rules and standards set forth by Steam's payment processors and related card networks and banks, or internet network providers. In particular, certain kinds of adult only content."

The new guideline coincided with Vavle removing games from Steam with titles like *Incest Tales: Webcam Daughter* and *Reincarnation in another world going to rape All NPCs VR*. But others with genre tags that still mentioned things like incest were left untouched, spreading confusion about where exactly Valve was drawing the line. It was also unclear why Valve was only taking action now despite this type of porn-slop, including some truly vile sounding games, have routinely crept onto the storefront. Instead of Valve banning a sexual assault sim called *No Mercy* earlier this year, it was voluntarily withdrawn from Steam by its creators.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Listed languages may not be available for all games in the package. View the individual games for more details.
Single-player
Family Sharing

Valve is still hosting this incest games bundle, making it unclear what sex games are fine and which ones it deems to offensive for payment processors. Screenshot: Valve / Kotaku

"We were recently notified that certain games on Steam may violate the rules and standards set forth by our payment processors and their related card networks and banks," a Valve spokesperson told *Eurogamer* last week when trying to explain the sudden and incomplete shift in its moderation of sex games. "As a result, we are retiring those games from being sold on the Steam Store, because loss of payment methods would prevent customers from being able to purchase other titles and game content on Steam."

It's not clear right now if the Steam will continue purging pornographic games from its back catalog or how exactly that process works in practice. Does it review games for infringing content first? Does it ban things based on how they look or sound and then wait for the creators to appeal later? And is it working off of clear guidelines from payment companies? It's that type of moderation mess that risks censoring various game-based works of art simply because someone in a position of power might go "ick," or, even worse, they saw someone making noise about it on social media and didn't want to get caught up in the drama.

That's certainly the approach that the owners of *Vice*, which originally broke the story on Collective Shout's relationship to the changes, appears to have taken. Savage Ventures, which invested in Vice after it went bankrupt, was accused by Valens of being behind the removal of two of her articles about the topic. "Vice's owner Savage Ventures has requested the removal of my Collective Shout articles," she posted on Bluesky over the weekend. "This is due to concerns about the controversial subject matter—not journalistic complaints."

In the meantime, Collective Shout cofounder Melinda Tankard Reist is calling those critical of Valve's decision "porn sick brain rotted pedo gamer fetishists." While the organization's initial letter accused Steam of hosting hundreds of games that would "breach Australian classification laws," Collective Shout has so far declined to name any specific examples. "Most of the content found within the games, including the graphics and the developers descriptions, are too distressing for us to make public," it wrote.